



FEMA

Glenville Buy-Outs: Back to Nature

Glenville, DE - When Bill Marino and his neighbors saw the flood waters rising around their neighborhood in September 2003, they knew their properties were in serious danger. "I saw the water covering the ground around the house so I headed for the car, but by the time I got outside the flood water had risen waist deep. This flood brought to light a major public health and safety issue for the entire neighborhood because there was no time to escape," Mr. Marino said.

Mr. Marino, long-time President of the Glenville/Stanton Crest Civic Association, and Tom Gordon, former county executive, unified the neighborhood and endeavored to have the State of Delaware purchase the flood-damaged homes. Mitigation studies conducted by the State concluded that property acquisition and relocation was a sound decision to address the flooding problem in Glenville.

Through the collaborative efforts of the State, New Castle County, the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) and FEMA, funds were allocated for the buyout project. In January 2004, The Glenville Reinvestment Project began the acquisition of 172 homes located within the 100-year flood plain. A local contracting firm coordinated the demolition and debris removal. This project was unique in the community because of the large number of homes that were purchased and because of DelDOT's proactive mitigation plan to use the land for a wetland habitat and future flood storage area.

The Glenville area has a long history of flooding; a total of 14 flood events are on record dating back to 1937. The 2003 flood, unlike previous floods, came without warning and flooded the entire neighborhood within fifteen minutes. Fortunately, the event occurred in the morning when most of the residents were at work and children were at school. Had the flood occurred at night, the threat to human safety would have been more severe. However, there were still many residents, including several elderly and handicapped persons in wheelchairs, whose lives were in serious jeopardy and who needed help immediately. The residents stranded in their homes when the flood occurred were thankful that a rescue team was in the area and able to assist them.

Recalling the 2003 flood, Mr. Marino said: "After this flood, everyone knew time was of the essence to relocate. The residents of Glenville were very pleased with the help they received and with how fast the purchase transactions were completed. Things get done when people work together." Many of the residents whose homes flooded relocated in less than nine months. The community now has one of the nicest wetland reserves in the state and a new flood storage area that will help reduce future flooding. The relocated families are at ease in their new homes, and are saving money on flood insurance premiums. As wildlife roam the open fields of the old neighborhood, the former residents can rest at ease when rain is forecasted.



New Castle County,
Delaware



Quick Facts

Year:

1993

Sector:

Public/Private Partnership

Cost:

Amount Not Available

Primary Activity/Project:

Acquisition/Buyouts

Primary Funding:

Community Assistance Program (CAP)